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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 002142

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SUBJECT: KUWAITI PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO TOKYO

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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11. (C) SUMMARY: Kuwaiti Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Al Mohammed Al Ahmed Al Sabah visited Tokyo July 26-29 in a visit that was described as very good by officials of both governments. The two sides issued a joint statement and signed two memorandum, one on conducting bilateral consultations, and another regarding the establishment of a joint committee focusing primarily on economic and commercial ties. In addition to meeting with Prime Minister Fukuda, PM Sabah was also received by the Emperor, lunched with key cabinet ministers (several of whom were subsequently replaced in a cabinet reshuffle on August 1), and met with members of the Diet, led by FM Koumura. END SUMMARY.

PRIME MINISTERS MEET

12. (C) Prime Minister Sabah was received by Prime Minister Fukuda on July 28 for a fifty minute meeting that was described as "a very good visit" by MOFA Second Middle East Division Deputy Director Michiko Miyano. Prime Minister Fukuda was accompanied by MOFA Middle Eastern and African Affairs Director General Norihiro Okuda (since replaced), a Deputy Minister from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and Japan's Ambassador to Kuwait. According to Miyano, PM Sabah opened the meeting by thanking Fukuda for Japan's assistance in liberating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in the first Gulf war. He also thanked Fukuda for the ongoing assistance Japan is providing to Iraq.

13. (C) The two Prime Ministers next discussed the oil crisis, both agreeing that the rapid rise in prices is not good for either consumers or producers. Sabah assured Fukuda that Kuwait will remain a reliable source of oil for Japan's energy needs, and Fukuda replied by offering Japanese assistance and technology in the field of both oil extraction and energy savings, including cooperation in promoting and

advancing renewable energy sources.

14. (C) On the subject of climate change, Miyano noted that Sabah's visit was the first Prime Ministerial bilateral meeting for Japan following the G-8 Summit earlier in the month, and it was therefore important for Japan that Kuwait voice support for Tokyo's policies to combat climate change. PM Fukuda sought to have Sabah endorse Japan's initiative to halve greenhouse gases by 2050, but the Kuwaiti Prime Minister did not, according to Miyano, give a clear reply. He merely confirmed that Kuwait is interested in Japanese energy saving technologies.

15. (C) PM Sabah greatly pleased the Japanese when he brought up and made positive remarks about Japan's "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative in the West Bank. He indicated Kuwait believes the initiative to be a good one, and the fact that a regional player not directly involved in the initiative recognized the role Japan is playing in the peace process went a long way with Fukuda.

16. (C) Finally, Fukuda closed the meeting by thanking Kuwait for its support to Japan's Air Self Defense Force, which is operating airlift missions in support of coalition units in Iraq using C-130 transport aircraft flying from a base in Kuwait. He also thanked Kuwait for supporting Iraq by appointing an ambassador to Baghdad and by hosting the expanded neighbors meeting last April.

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17. (C) Following the meeting, the two sides released a joint statement that memorialized the subjects discussed above and also addressed several others, including:

-- Iran, which they urged to comply with relevant U.N. resolutions, while at the same time also calling for all countries in the region to join the NPT regime;

-- Lebanon, welcoming the election of President Suleiman and the formation of a national unity government led by Prime Minister Siniora;

-- the Korean peninsula, calling for a full and expeditious implementation of the Joint Statement of September 2005, and for a resolution to the abductee issue; and

-- comprehensive reform of the United Nations, although not mentioning specifically Japan's desire to obtain a permanent seat on the security council.

The full text of the joint statement can be found on the Japanese MOFA's official web site at www.mofa.go.jp/region.middle_e/kuwait/pmv0807/joint.html.

JOINT MEMORANDUMS

18. (C) Following the meeting between the two Prime Ministers, both attended a signing ceremony for two memorandum. The first, a "Memorandum on Conducting Bilateral Consultations Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait" calls for consultative meetings at the Political Director level on a regular basis alternating between Kuwait and Tokyo or on the margins of other international meetings. According to Miyano, it was the Kuwaitis who specifically requested such a document, which calls for the development of "bilateral relations in every field and on various levels."

19. (C) The second memorandum is entitled "Memorandum on Establishing a Joint Committee between the Government of Japan and the Government of the State of Kuwait" and is geared more specifically to economic and commercial relations. The agreement calls for consulting on issues of

mutual interest, developing and expanding the scope of economic cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, and technology transfer, and also for enhancing cooperation in the oil and gas sector, both upstream and downstream. On the Japanese side, the committee will be chaired at the ministerial level by both MOFA and METI, while Kuwait will have one chair, its Minister of Foreign Affairs. Miyano told us that the Kuwaitis wanted to make this agreement as broad as possible, while the Japanese side preferred a narrower approach. She described it as similar to arrangements Japan already has with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, and said it has been under discussion for over a year.

OTHER MEETINGS

¶10. (C) In addition to meeting with PM Fukuda, PM Sabah was also received by the Emperor and participated in a "social lunch" hosted by Fukuda which included Minister of Foreign Affairs Koumura, Minister of Defense Ishiba, METI Minister Amari, Minister of Finance Nukaga, and former Minister of Defense and National Security Advisor Koike. (NOTE: Ishiba, Amari, and Nukaga were all subsequently replaced in an August

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1 cabinet shakeup. END NOTE.) Minister of Defense Ishiba also made a separate courtesy call, and FM Koumura, who serves as the head of the Japan-Kuwait Parliamentary Friendship Association, also escorted a group of Diet members to see PM Sabah.

¶11. (C) According to Miyano, the Japanese were very pleased by the visit, but were slightly embarrassed by one event that didn't go as well as planned. She explained that the Kuwaitis were interested in visiting the "Yurikamome" elevated rail line, a rather impressive system that starts in downtown, crosses Tokyo Bay on the Rainbow Bridge, and ends on Odaiba Island, an area full of shopping and amusement attractions. Apparently the Kuwaitis are interested in constructing a similar system, but unfortunately the outing wasn't as effective as it could have been due to interpretation shortcomings. Nevertheless, the visit as a whole was deemed a success by the Japanese, as well as by the Kuwaitis who, according to Kuwaiti Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Khaled Al-Mutairi, left Japan completely satisfied.

¶11. (C) In addition to the Prime Minister, the Kuwaiti delegation also consisted of Advisor to His Highness the Amir Abdulrahman Al-Ateeqi, Second Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Saqer, the Advisor in the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister Dr. Ismail Al-Shatti, Finance Minister Mustafa Al-Shimali, Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Khaled Al-Jarallah, Chairman of Kuwait Civil Aviation Fawaz Al-Farah, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdul Rahman Al-Otaibi, Undersecretary in the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister Khaled Al-Banai, and General Director of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Abdulwahab Al-Bader.
SCHIEFFER